

MARY LOUISE MRVOS



Mary Lou (Lois) Mrvos passed away peacefully on Friday, December 1, 2023 at the age of 97.

She was the beloved wife of the late Miles D. Mrvos, M.D. and is survived by her children Diana Mrvos Rath (Diana Mrvos, M.D.) and her husband Frank Rath, Jr., and Dan Mrvos (Hope Sullivan); grandmother of Christina Lamport (Jason) and Allison Espinel (Daniel). Her sisters and brother were the late

Mildred Stepaniak, Olga Hulley, and John Lois, Jr.

Born in 1926 to Rose (Walyko) and John P. Lois, Mary Lou grew up in Oakland as the third of four children in a large and prominent family in the Greek Catholic community, her father John Lois being President of the Greek Catholic Union (GCU).

Mary Lou graduated from Schenley High School in 1943 at age 16. As she would explain, "In those days, if you were smart, they would just skip you ahead a year or two..." Before college, she filled those 2 skipped years working for the Director of Nursing at Children's Hospital. She then attended the University of Pittsburgh, where she was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and earned a B.A. in History, graduating in 1950. From there she returned to Children's Hospital where she worked until embarking on the next major chapter of her life.

That chapter started with the chance meeting one night while baby-sitting her sister Olga's first child. She met a handsome young U.S. Navy physician, Miles Mrvos, who was a Navy friend of Olga's husband. That meeting quickly blossomed into a romance with Miles and Mary Lou marrying in June of 1955. Shortly thereafter, they moved to Boston, where Miles completed his chief medical residency at Boston City Hospital while Mary Lou worked in the Geology Department at M.I.T. The arrival of their daughter, Diana, in September of 1956 sparked a move back to Pittsburgh to be closer to family. Miles established a surgical practice at the University hospitals in Oakland while Mary Lou established their home close by in the Schenley Farms neighborhood. Their second child, Dan, was born there in 1963. Mary Lou loved the convenience of city life: walking, taking a taxi or bus with her kids to shops, movies, museums, and restaurants, and having groceries delivered to the house from Stevenson's market. When the family moved to Fox Chapel in 1971, she finally relented and learned to drive at age 45. From that point on she loved the independence of driving and only reluctantly relinquished her car keys at the age of 93.

This middle chapter of Mary Lou's life came to an abrupt culmination in the fall of 1981, a time filled with both joy and tragedy. In September of 1981 Diana had commenced her final year at Harvard Medical School, and Dan had started his first year at Dartmouth. October brought the wedding of Diana to Frank Rath, Jr. Scarcely one month later, just before Thanksgiving, Mary Lou's husband Miles died suddenly of a stroke at age 55.

Mary Lou mourned Miles' passing but showed almost unimaginable strength in this period of great transition. She transformed herself from "Mom" to the head of the family, as she became best friend, confidant, and advisor to her now adult children. As exceptional as she was in this phase of her life, it was really just a prelude for the final chapter, which lasted more than 30 years.

This most recent and final chapter – and in Mary Lou's mind, the most significant – was defined by her role as "Grandma" to Frank and Diana Rath's daughters, Christina and Allison. The relationship Mary Lou had with her granddaughters was unique and rare in today's world. Both Christina and Alli saw their grandma almost every day of their lives, from birth through the day they left for college. Many many of those days, in their younger years, included a trip to Ice Cream World in Allison Park. Grandma was a constant fixture at tennis matches, swim meets, and all types of school events and performances. The relationship continued as her granddaughters made their way through college, graduate school, boyfriends, first professional jobs, and recently the marriages of Christina to Jason Lamport and Alli to Daniel Espinel. To see Christina, Alli, and their "Grandma" in the same room – at any time in the past 30 years – was like watching 3 friends of the same age, speaking in their own "secret language."

Mary Lou was an exceptionally warm and caring person. She could effortlessly connect with people and make them feel welcome. Yet, she was modest and didn't think there was anything out of the ordinary to her manner. She would say, "All I do is just talk to people. Why is that special?" Somehow it was. Mary Lou was bright and knowledgeable and well-read, almost until the day of her death. A phone call from her to "just tell you one thing" easily stretched into an hour-long conversation. She remained intellectually sharp and lived independently until a recent fall and cancer diagnosis claimed her health in the last 2 months of her life. Even during this time, she listened to her favorite opera (Madam Butterfly) and watched The Crown on Netflix with her granddaughters. She wanted to discuss politics and continued to lament the demise of printed newspapers.

Despite all the warmth and life Mary Lou projected, she had a contradictory side. As much as she loved people and people loved her, she didn't like formal social gatherings, never liked to plan a party, and always needed coaxing to attend any event outside the home. But once there, she was the life of the party. Within the family, no event seemed complete or successful unless Grandma attended. But what Mary Lou liked more than anything else – when you could really get to know her – was when you stopped by her apartment, for a cold coke ("with lots of ice") and a dish of pretzels, served at the kitchen table... And if the conversation really got going, she would get up and make you one of the best sandwiches in the world.

Mary Lou, Mom, Grandma: We love you so much.

All friends and family are invited to a reception celebrating Mary Lou's life from noon until 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023, at the Fox Chapel Golf Club, 426 Fox Chapel Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238. There will be no visitation. In lieu of flowers, remembrances may be made to Child Fund International, www.childfund.org.

Arrangements are by **JOHN A. FREYVOGEL SONS INC.**, www.freyvogelfuneralhome.com

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb